

**DRAFT Remarks for Ambassador Michael D. Kirby
MCC Threshold Country Program SOAG Signing
Codru Hotel
10:00 AM, Friday, December 15, 2006**

First Deputy Prime Minister Greceanii, MCC Vice President Harrington,
USAID Regional Mission Director Gast, Members of the Working Group,
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press.

This simple ceremony that we are about to witness, is far more than just an agreement between friends and set of signatures on handful of pieces of paper. It is the successful result of many months of hard work by the members of the Working Group, under the leadership and vision of First Deputy Prime Minister Greceanii, in close partnership with the staff of the United States Embassy team here in Moldova and with the Millennium Challenge Corporation in Washington.

It is the culmination of the Government of Moldova's hard work and commitment to the implementation of reform, including the enactment of the Guillotine Law, a success in which we are particularly proud of the supporting role that we were able to play.

But this agreement is also a dramatic new beginning. It is the start of a new, deeper, stronger stage in the continuing partnership between the American people and the people and the Government of Moldova.

The path that we are embarking upon together today, starting with this Threshold Country Program, and leading onward to the goal of full Millennium

Challenge Account Compact assistance, represents a real and substantial transformational opportunity for the people of Moldova.

This Threshold Country Program and the future full Compact assistance program, in coordination with the assistance of other donors, has the potential to transform Moldova from a transitional country, struggling to free itself from the legacy and the rubble of the collapse of the Soviet Union; into a modern, thriving, European, market democracy and a genuine European Union aspirant.

We are looking forward to the challenge that we are undertaking together in this Threshold Country Program; working in support of your efforts to deepen reform; reduce corruption; and introduce greater transparency, accountability, and simplicity to the services and daily operations of the Government of Moldova.

We are fully committed to this on-going partnership, and we are confident that full qualification for Millennium Challenge Compact Status will be well within Moldova's reach in the very near future.

Congratulations.